Patent Application No.10/062,340
Reply and Amendment dated August 14, 2006
Reply to Final Office Action of February 13, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 and 25-47 are currently pending in the application. Claims 12-24 have been withdrawn. Claims 1, 25, 36 and 42 have been amended herein.

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Claims 1-11 and 25-47 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,523,040 (hereinafter referred to as "the '040 patent") to Lo et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,884,306 (hereinafter referred to as "the '306 patent") to Bliss et al., and further in view of Courter's "Mastering Microsoft Office 2000, Professional Addition," Copyright 04/1999, Sybex, pp. 1058-1062 (hereinafter referred to as "the Courter reference").

Independent claim 1 is directed to a method that facilitates a user's ability to interactively manipulate the results of a search of an electronic catalog so as to more readily identify a desired item in the catalog. This ability to interactively manipulate the search results is particularly useful when the search identifies a large number of items as satisfying a search criteria. The method of claim 1 comprises: (a) displaying a list of items in an electronic catalog, each item corresponding to a row of the display, each row having values corresponding to attributes of the corresponding items arranged into attribute columns; (b) grouping some of the displayed items based on a selected attribute upon receiving a grouping command from a viewer of the display so that the grouped items are displayed in a single row having attributes corresponding to attributes of the of the grouped items and attribute values corresponding to the attribute values of the grouped items, wherein the grouping command is received after displaying the list of items; (c) expanding the grouped items upon receiving an expand command from a viewer of the display so that the grouped items are each displayed in a separate row, wherein the expand command is received after displaying the list of items and after a group command is received; (d) removing a row corresponding to an item or to grouped items from the display upon receiving a row remove command from a viewer of the display; wherein the row remove command is received after displaying the list of items; and (e) removing a column corresponding to an attribute of the items from the display upon receiving a column remove command from a viewer of the display, wherein the column remove command is received after displaying the list of items.

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The '040 patent is directed to table compression that is performed prior to the display of the data in the table on a display device. The compression of table prior to display relieves the viewer from having to engage in compression of the table after the uncompressed table has been displayed. As discussed at column 2, lines 19-22, an output table is generated "having a reduced row/column count and/or format such that the output table is manageable for viewing on a plurality of viewing devices each having unique display capabilities." Furthermore, column 2, lines 45-48 go on to state that "table summarization is only required when it is determined that one or more tables require compression of reduction to accommodate the viewing device." Thus, the output provided to a particular viewing device is compressed, if required, prior to transmitting the output to the viewing device. This is further discussed with respect to meta-data that is defined for tables that sets out the pre-defined row and column reduction rules. For example, at column 4, lines 49-56, the '040 patent discusses table reduction performed by applying meta-data which are specific to each table and preferably stored with the object to be viewed. In the event that a particular user desires to have a unique display, the user must set up the display prior to viewing a table. As noted at column 5, lines 23-30, a proxy server receives an object and meta-data and takes into account "the viewing device's capabilities/limitations and possibly a user viewing preference in the situation where a user viewing preference was previously pre-registered with the proxy." This is further supported by Figs 4 and 6, and the associated discussion, that clearly indicate that compression rules are predefined, and that table compression is performed prior to providing the table to a viewing device. Such pre-defined rules are illustrated in Figs. 9 and 11a.

The Courter reference is directed to Web page that includes a Spreadsheet component that can be published with interactivity that allows users to work with the data via a browser. Apparently, this interactivity allows viewers to modify data in a Spreadsheet component after the Spreadsheet component is displayed. While the Courter reference appears to disclose certain types of data manipulation functions (e.g., Fig. 45.2), the reference does not teach or suggest any kind of grouping function or provide any reason why grouping of data as claimed in the present application would be desirable.

The '306 patent is directed to a system and method for directly manipulating fields for grouping items. The examples provided in Figs. 6-15 illustrate that tasks may be placed in

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different groups that are displayed, and after a group is displayed, the list of tasks within such a group can be collapsed and expanded.

The '040 reference teaches that it is desirable to compress a table prior to the display of the table. The benefit of compressing a table before displaying the table is that a viewer is relieved from having an uncompressed table or portion thereof displayed and then having to somehow manipulate the table to obtain a manageable display. In contrast, both the Courter reference and the '306 patent are directed to the manipulation of data in a table after the display of the table. It is submitted that the '040 references teaches away from the concept of manipulating data in a table after the data has been displayed. As such, to modify the '040 reference according to the teachings of the Courter reference and/or the '306 patent would render the invention of the '040 patent unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.

The '306 patent does not teach of teach or suggest expanding group items where the grouped items are displayed in a single row having attributes corresponding to attributes of the grouped items and attribute values corresponding to the attribute values of the grouped items. Rather, grouped items are under a single title that does not have attribute corresponding to the attributes of the grouped items or attribute values corresponding to the attribute values of the grouped items or a combination of such features.

The Courter reference is apparently cited for suggesting that a grouping command is received after displaying the list of items. While the Courter reference appears to disclose certain types of data manipulation functions (e.g., Fig. 45.2), the reference does not teach or suggest any kind of grouping function or provide any motivation for grouping of data as claimed in the present application would be desirable. Further, the Courter reference fails to teach or suggest grouping of the type claimed, namely, grouping such that grouped items are displayed in a single row having attributes corresponding to the attributes of the grouped items and attribute values corresponding to the attribute values of the grouped items.

The '040 reference is cited for teaching removing a row and removing a column. However, each of these features is implemented prior to the displaying of a table. In contrast, the invention of claim1 requires the removing of a row upon receiving a row remove command from a viewer of the display where the row remove command is received after displaying the list of items. Claim 1 further requires the removing of a column upon receiving a column remove

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command from a viewer of the display where the column remove command is received after displaying the list of items.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully asserted that independent claim 1 is patentable over the '040 patent, Courter reference, and '306 patent, as applied.

Since the examiner has provided no comments as to how the '040 patent, Courter reference, and '306 patent are to be applied in rejecting any of claims 25-47, the applicant is assuming that claims 25-47 have not been rejected based on this combination of references.

Claims 2-11 are dependent claims, with each claim directly or indirectly depending from independent claims 1. Consequently, each of these dependent claims is at least allowable for the reasons noted with respect to the independent claim 1. Each of these dependent claims may be allowable for other reasons, and the applicant expressly reserves the right to assert any such reason in the future.

Claims 25-32 and 34-47 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the '040 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,014,639 (hereinafter referred to as "the '639 patent") to Fohn et al.

Independent claim 25 is directed to a method that comprises: (a) searching an electronic catalog for items that meet a criteria identified in a received request; (b) displaying a list of items identified in the search; (c) displaying a plurality of attributes for each item and values for the plurality of attributes of each item; (d) receiving a selection of one of the displayed attributes; (e) consolidating at least two of the displayed items based on the selected attribute; and (f) displaying the consolidated items as a single item.

The '639 patent is directed to an electronic catalog system. The Action indicates that the '639 patent teaches receiving a selection of one of the displayed attributes. However, the cited passage in the '639 patent teaches parametric searching in which a value of an attribute is used to drill down. The cited passage of the '639 patent does not teach or suggest searching based on a selection of one of the displayed attributes, as required by independent claim 25.

The '040 patent does not teach or suggest the consolidating of two displayed items based on a selected attribute where the selected attribute is an attribute that is selected from a display.

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The '040 patent is, in contrast, directed to the concept of compressing a table prior to any display.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully asserted that independent claim 25 is patentable over the '040 patent and '649 patent, as applied.

Independent claim 36 is, other than the preamble, substantially identical to independent claim 25. Consequently, independent claim 36 is also patentable over the cited references for substantially the same reasons as noted with respect to independent claim 25.

Independent claim 42, while not substantially identical to independent claim 25, is patentable over the cited references for substantially the same reasons as noted with respect to independent claim 25.

Claims 26-32, 34-35, 37-41, and 43-47 are dependent claims, with each claim directly or indirectly depending from one of independent claims 25, 36, and 42. Consequently, each of these dependent claims is at least allowable for the reasons noted with respect to the independent claim from which it depends. Each of these dependent claims may be allowable for other reasons, and the applicant expressly reserves the right to assert any such reason in the future.

Claim 33 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the '639 patent in view of the '040 patent, and further in view of the '306 patent.

Claim 33 is a dependent claim that depends directly from independent claim 25. Consequently, claim 33 is at least allowable for the reasons noted with respect to independent claim 25. However, claim 33 may be allowable for other reasons, and the applicant expressly reserves the right to assert any such reason in the future.

No claim related fees are believed to be due with this response. In the event any such fees are due, please debit Deposit Account 08-2623.
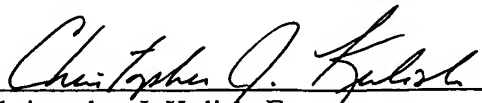

The application now appearing to be in form for allowance, reconsideration and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

HOLLAND & HART LLP

By: _Christopher J. Kulish_____

Christopher J. Kulish, Esq.
Registration No. 33,056
P.O. Box 8749
Denver, Colorado 80201-8749
(303) 473-2700, x2731

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